MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL

Annual Report 2006

The DD Council believes that people with developmental disabilities and their families must be supported and empowered to speak for themselves individually and collectively.

They must not only be listened to — they must be heard.



2006 Advocates present Governor with a petition containing hundreds of signatures in support of the community services waiting list.

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

Our Vision

The Council believes that all people, regardless of how complex or severe their disability, belong in the community with the support they need to maximize independence, be productive, and lead the lives they choose. Practices that segregate and isolate people with disabilities must end.

Our Mission

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council is a public policy organization that advocates for the inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities in all facets of community life.

To Accomplish Our Mission The Council:

- Educates and informs policymakers about issues of importance to people with developmental disabilities and their families.
- ◆ Advocates for services, policies and practices that support people with developmental disabilities to exercise self-determination and lead productive, fulfilling lives.
- Designs and funds innovative projects that promote community inclusion and improve services and supports.
- Focuses on bringing about lasting improvements in the areas of: education and early intervention, child care, employment, transportation, community supports, recreation, housing, health, and quality assurance.

Council Members

The majority of the Council is comprised of people with developmental disabilities or family members of people with developmental disabilities. One member is a person or a family member of a person once or now institutionalized.

The Council also includes representatives from state agencies, the Protection and Advocacy System (Maryland Disability Law Center) and the University Center on Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (Kennedy Krieger Institute). Other Council members include representatives from local agencies and non-profit organizations that provide services and supports to people with developmental disabilities.

and Outcomes on

TASH — My Life-Going FAR



The My Life Going FAR project is in its final year of funding from the Council. The project has focused on advocating for statewide policies to support the New Directions waiver. In addition, the project developed trainings, identified community resources and strengthened the peer mentor program. MLGF continues to facilitate the concept of self-direction by providing the tools and trainings needed to successfully participate in the waiver. The project has helped people with developmental disabilities guide their own services, as they are finally able to exercise greater choice and control over their everyday lives. The project is working with resource coordination to help providers understand their role in the waiver as well as creating materials and trainings specifically for Support Brokers. The project has presented at various conferences across the state and trained over

300 people with regards to community supports. For more information on the New Directions Waiver please visit the DDA website at *www.dhmh.state.md.us/dda*.

Cross Disability Rights Coalition

People On the Go and ADAPT of Maryland



In 2006 the number of individuals active in systems advocacy increased as a result of CDRC's trainings and efforts. CDRC is in its fifth year of funding from the Council and has over 40 members, with 35 actively involved in varying degrees of systems change and leadership. CDRC presented to over 300 advocates from around the country on de-institutionalization. They continue to support advocates in their common goal of transitioning individuals from State Residential Centers and nursing facilities to supportive community settings.

CDRC informed policymakers and advocates about health care issues that directly impact people with disabilities through active participation on DHMH's Medicaid Advisory Council and the Medicaid Matters Maryland coalition.

CDRC has placed members on 10 different Statewide policy committees and taskforces. CDRC continues to be a strong voice heard during the legislative session as they support members to provide testimony in both the House and the Senate. In addition to educating policymakers and legislators, CDRC provided crucial input on Maryland's application for the Money Follows the Person Demonstration Rebalancing grant. To keep track of CDRC's many activities you can visit their website at **www.thecdrc.org**.

Rights. 66 The good we secure for ourselves is precarious and uncertain, until it is secured for all of us and incorporated into our common life. 99 Jane Addams

and Outcomes &

Youth Empowerment Alliance

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

www.mdtransition.org



The YEA is funded by the federal Administration on Developmental Disabilities with additional supports from the Maryland Department of Education/DORS.

The YEA, a project of the Council, is in its second year of funding. The project provides opportunities for youth and young adults with disabilities to develop independence and leadership skills as they transition from school to the adult world. In 2006 YEA's forty-hour Leadership Training Program was piloted and presented to various organizations and conferences throughout the state. The program reached 70 participants with its unique peer-to-peer training format, which consists of a professional, a youth with a disability, and a youth without a disability.

Sponsored by a grant from the YEA, the Arc of Baltimore in collaboration with Baltimore City Public Schools and local colleges has developed a mentorship program for youth with disabilities. The program focuses on supporting high school students in becoming more involved in the IEP process. Currently, the program has several youth paired with college mentors and plans to expand in 2007.

Mini-Grants Awarded to the following Maryland Organizations:

◆ Commitment to Service Initiative (CSI)

CSI is an innovative, teen-led service project offered through the Jewish Volunteer Connection (JVC). The project funded by YEA joined 16 teens into 8 mentorship pairs; each pair consisted of a youth with a disability and a youth without a disability. The pairs provided support and training to each other as they participated in community volunteer projects of the CSI. The project also developed materials and provided training for additional youth and staff members involved in the volunteer projects. The mentorship volunteer project will continue in 2007 with total sponsorship by the JVC.

Youth, Government and Leadership Grant

In Maryland most local YMCA's offer a leadership program for teens entitled, "Youth and Government." The Howard County YMCA and its grant partners modified the "Youth and Government" curriculum to be more inclusive for youth with disabilities. The next step for the new curriculum is for it to be shared with other YMCA's throughout the state.

In addition, 75 Howard County YMCA staff participated in a variety of trainings to promote inclusion for youth with disabilities. The trainings focused on alternative teaching strategies for all youth, as well as general use of modifications and accommodations for youth and young adults with Down syndrome and other developmental disabilities. The staff was educated on the importance of inclusion concerning all of the YMCA programs while increasing their knowledge of disability specific issues.

Arts on the Block (AOB)

The AOB is an apprenticeship program for youth provided by Montgomery County Career Transition Center in collaboration with Montgomery County Public Schools. The YEA mini-grant provided an opportunity for youth with disabilities to be included in this unique six-week program by providing training and support for the instructors. The instructors guided the group, which for the first time included youth with disabilities, in creating a commissioned mosaic and developing a business and marketing plan for their product. The AOB will be able to continue to promote the inclusion of youth with disabilities in this one of a kind apprenticeship program due to the training provided to the instructional staff.

and Outcomes on

Legislative Internship at the MD General Assembly

People On the Go of Maryland

Ken Capone, co-leader of the Cross Disabilities Rights Coalition and member of People On the Go completed his second internship with Senator Grosfeld. The Council funded the internship and the Arc of Maryland provided support. The Senator assigned Mr. Capone to serve as a disability policy expert focusing on legislation and budgeting issues. Mr. Capone submitted testimony on 17 bills and monitored several others. Throughout the legislative session Mr. Capone kept in close contact with the disability community. He met regularly with People On the Go and CDRC to inform them of specific bills and gain their input before submitting testimony.

66 Your testimony was indisputable, cogent, organized and factual. You were able to reduce the issue to a way people without disabilities could relate to and understand.
...my committee values your input. ??

~ Senator Sharon Grosfeld ~

Leaders In Disability Policy

The Coordinating Center, Abilities Network, Maryland Association of Non Profit Organizations, Leadership Anne Arundel, MD Technical Assistance Program

In 2006, the Leaders In Disability Policy project led by the Coordinating Center entered its second year. The project began piloting and implementing a new and innovative "skills-based" leadership development curriculum which the project developed last year. The pilot included 20 participants, representing self-advocates, parents and service providers who took part in monthly training classes and related activities. Teams were formed to focus on priority issues that the participants' chose to impact. Experienced mentors were utilized to support and guide the participants. The project also began the process of identifying new organizations and opportunities to continue this leadership program well into the future. For more information visit www.bealeader.info.

Leadership. 66 There are those who look at things the way they are, and ask why... I dream of things that never were, and ask why not? 79 Robert Kennedy

and Outcomes on

Maryland Youth Leadership (YLF)

In 2006, the Council continued its support of and involvement with the Maryland Youth Leadership Forum. The YLF is a program for high school students with disabilities who have leadership qualities, been successful in academics and are involved in their schools and communities. Through the YLF students receive training, hands on experiences, role models and mentors to assist them in becoming future leaders. The Council planned and coordinated the activities for the YLF Legislative Activity day. 30 youth from around the State had the opportunity to present testimony during a mock legislative hearing while visiting the State Capitol. For more information visit www.md-ylf.org.

HEALTH

∞ Initiatives and Outcomes ∞

Advocacy & Education to Improve Health Care Access

The Council continued working to improve access to quality health care for people with developmental disabilities by supporting consumer input in policy development and assessment, participating in health care advocacy, and by educating policymakers and providers.

Much of this work continued through the Council's affiliation with, and support of, the Medicaid Matters! Maryland coalition. MM!MD is a statewide consumer-directed coalition of 70 organizations representing people with disabilities and others who advocate for healthcare improvements.

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDED:

- The MM!MD annual conference, which the Council co-sponsored, brought together approximately 250 advocates, policymakers and local and national experts to learn about healthcare reform and how Maryland can strengthen its Medicaid system.
- Educating and advocating with policymakers. The Council and the MM!MD coalition supported a major health care
 expansion initiative via Medicaid and supported legislative oversight prior to the enactment of significant waivers or
 changes to the state's Medicaid services.

EDUCATION & EARLY INTERVENTION

and Outcomes on

Inclusive Education: Accelerating Systems Change

Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education

2006 was the first year of the Inclusive Education: Accelerating Systems Change Project designed to support students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. The project, administered by the Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education (MCIE) builds upon previous efforts supported by the Council. The purpose of the project is to increase the number of students with disabilities in Maryland who are placed in general education classes in their neighborhood schools; promote systemic change through advocacy and capacity-building; and support students and families in obtaining more inclusive educational opportunities through the Individualized Education Plan process.

In 2006, MCIE provided legal and informal representation for 124 children and families. Support was provided through IEP meetings, informal school systems meetings as well as mediations and due process. MCIE provided similar services to another 250 families through information and referrals. In addition, MCIE provided training to more than 325 parents, teachers, and others about inclusive education opportunities. For more information visit *www.mcie.org*.

High School Assessments (HSA) and Graduation Requirements for Students with Disabilities

In 2006, members of the Task Force on Comparable Testing Methods for Maryland High School Assessments (HSA) completed their work and forwarded a set of comprehensive recommendations to the State Board of Education. The recommendations focused on a "comparable" assessment for students obtaining content knowledge, but otherwise not able to demonstrate that knowledge during traditional testing scenarios. If implemented, the recommendation will utilize a "portfolio-based" assessment containing a collection of the student's work along with achievement data. This will allow students with developmental disabilities and other learning disabilities to demonstrate their knowledge based on performance rather than formal testing environments.

The Council was active on the Task Force and will continue to work with the Department of Education and other stakeholders as the recommendations are piloted in four jurisdictions.

Education Advocacy Coalition (EAC) for Students with Disabilities

The Council conducts a great deal of education and advocacy through active participation on the EAC. The EAC is comprised of more than 22 groups and individuals concerned with special education issues in Maryland.

The Coalition meets monthly with the Assistant State Superintendent of Special Education & Early Intervention Services to discuss statewide special education matters with stakeholder groups and to develop or weigh in on legislation effecting students with disabilities. In 2006, the EAC was active both locally and nationally in providing comments and testimony during the IDEA regulatory process. Members of the Coalition also participated on a statewide COMAR revision task force, responsible for recommending revisions to Maryland's regulations to align with federal regulations.

EDUCATION & EARLY INTERVENTION

and Outcomes on

Cecil County Public Schools

Improving Inclusive Education

In 2006, the Council provided funding to support Cecil County Public School System's 4 year systems change initiative. The school system continues to make significant progress towards improving the delivery of special education services in more inclusive environments to all students in Cecil County Public Schools. The Council's funds provided ongoing training for staff members with a focus on the use of assistive technology; enabling students with disabilities greater communication opportunities in their classroom environments. Broadening the impact, school staff presented at the statewide leadership conference to all special education directors from across Maryland. The presentation concentrated on activities and strategies that could be used to increase inclusive educational opportunities and reduce non-public placements and pull out services.

Together We're Better

The Council joined The Arc of Maryland, in partnership with The State Department of Education, Department of Disabilities, and the Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education in celebrating the National Inclusive Schools Week by supporting the annual Together We're Better Contest.

Students from across the State were invited to submit an essay or poster describing the benefits of an inclusive education. This year's contest included more than 130 essays and 85 posters. The winners were acknowledged during a celebration and awards ceremony in Annapolis.



Maryland Interagency Transition Council for Youth with Disabilities

The Council serves on the Maryland Interagency Transition Council for Youth with Disabilities (ITC), created to coordinate and implement interagency planning for the delivery of services for secondary students with disabilities. In 2006, ITC and the MD Department of Disabilities completed a study to map resources available at the state-level that support the transition of youth with disabilities from secondary education to employment and postsecondary education, to identify the gaps and overlaps in resources, to prepare recommendations to the state based on the study's findings, and to develop a preliminary action plan to address identified gaps and overlaps. The ITC will be working to implement a strategic plan in 2007.

COMMUNITY

∞ Initiatives and Outcomes ∞

Ending Institutionalization & Increasing Community Supports

Guided by a belief in "community for all," the Council continued to work in partnership with people with disabilities, parents and members of the Developmental Disabilities Coalition to expand supports in the community and end reliance on institutions.

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDED:

- Hosting Developmental Disabilities Day at the Legislature where over 350 participants learned about an array of critical issues and educated their legislators.
- Successfully advocating for increases in the developmental disabilities community services budget.
- Utilizing the media to educate the public and policymakers about the Community Services Waiting List a "quiet crisis" that demands action.
- Engaging the media to educate the public about why transitioning people from institutions to the community is the right thing for Maryland to do.
- Researching best and promising practices for serving people with challenging needs in the community.

Family NET Works

Family NET Works, a project of the Council, continues to be a leader in providing disability related resources and supports. The compression in providing disability related resources and supports. The compre-

hensive website averages approximately 14,000 unique visits per month. The extensive list serve not only connects parents for encouragement and support it has helped families to successfully advocate for such things as: accessible playgrounds, inclusive childcare, and accessible transportation. Family NET Works collaborated with The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration, local Special Education Citizen Advisory Committees, local Arc's, the Parents' Place of Maryland and parent support groups to bring the "Journey to Inclusion" training series to several counties across the state. The series brought together more than 350 parents, community members and professionals from the education field to learn about improving inclusion for people with disabilities both at school and in the community.

Workshops within the series focused systematically on the issues that effect inclusion across the lifespan such as; defining inclusion, education and modifications, friendship, behavior, transition, employment, college, and housing. The Family NET Works project continues to receive positive feedback that it helps families get connected, understand current issues and find needed supports. For more information visit www.family-networks.org.

Maryland Juvenile Justice Coalition

An estimated 30% of the youth involved with the juvenile justice system have disabilities and 10% have intellectual disabilities. Because of these high numbers, there is a critical need for advocacy for the development and provision of services for these youth and their families. The Maryland Juvenile Justice Coalition believes that the State should commit to supporting effective community-based programs and research-based best practices rather than institutional settings for incarcerated youth. As a member of the Coalition, the Council is working for increased family and community-focused services in Maryland.

CHILDCARE

∞ Initiatives and Outcomes ∞

Strategic Planning - Recommendations to be Implemented

As a result of the Council's legislative advocacy, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) developed an "Implementation Plan for Inclusive Child and School Age Care" in 2006. The Council was active in the development of the plan's recommendations; nearly all of which were incorporated into the Division of Early Childhood Development's (DECD) three-year strategic plan and unanimously approved by the State Board of Education.

The implementation plan is an important step to improving child care providers' understanding of including children with developmental disabilities and special health care needs. By embedding, as appropriate, training on inclusion, ADA and special needs in the state's training requirements, providers and licensing staff will strengthen



their knowledge base and increase their ability to care for all children. Doing so will help providers and families access needed resources and remove some of the barriers families of children with developmental disabilities and special health care needs face in accessing child care.

Collaboration. 46 You can't stay in your corner of the forest waiting for others to come to you. You have to go to them sometimes. 59 Winnie-the-Pooh

Promoting Inclusive Practices

The Council expanded its influence on how child care resources impact families in Maryland by serving as a peer reviewer for several large system grants designed to promote access to child care for children with disabilities and special health care needs. This provided an opportunity to further promote and support inclusive practices.

In addition, the Council used state and national conferences and a national newsletter to teach the concept of "creating powerful partnerships" between parents, advocates, and key system personnel to promote inclusive child care opportunities.

Assessing Need - Building Partnerships

Focus groups were held with key child care community stakeholders to help define effective uses of Council resources dedicated to inclusive child care. As a result, the Council designed a new project for 2007 targeted to serve Wicomico County, an underserved area. We built upon existing partnerships and established new alliances on the Eastern Shore. The intent is to establish sustainable, effective practices and offer new resources that result in families receiving the child care they need and want.

TRANSPORTATION

and Outcomes on

SEEC Project Ride



Project Ride expanded its services and supports to Prince George's and Howard Counties, during its second year of funding through the Council. The project is administered through SEEC, a non-profit human services agency and

receives support from the J. Willard and Alice S. Marriot Foundation. Project Ride is guided by an Advisory Committee comprised of transportation providers, human services personnel, transitioning youth educators, people with cognitive disabilities and their family members, and representatives of local government agencies. Through the project, self-advocates who are experienced in the transit system conducted travel training for people with developmental disabilities enabling them to broaden their opportunities for community inclusion. Sensitivity training, disability awareness, and other travel related information was provided to 90 service providers across Montgomery County.

Through their evaluation process, Project Ride compiled valuable information regarding transportation needs and barriers for people with disabilities and their families. The information was then used to make improvements to training curriculums for both Ride On, a transit service for Montgomery County and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. The project created a comprehensive website *www.freedomintransit.org* that offers needed resources to transit providers and service agencies, as well as individuals and their families.

Advocacy. 66 One can never consent to creep when one feels an impulse to soar. 99

Helen Keller

EMPLOYMENT

and Outcomes on

Maryland Coalition for Work Incentives Improvement

One of the major concerns for people with disabilities who want to work is the fear of losing Medicaid health care coverage. In an effort spearheaded by the Council in 2000, the Maryland Coalition for Work Incentives Improvement was formed to help develop a program that would extend Medical Assistance health benefits to working Marylanders with disabilities. Through the work of the Coalition, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH), and the Department of Disabilities, the Employed Individuals with Disabilities Program was launched in April 2006. The Program allows people with disabilities to go to work and keep their health benefits by paying a small fee, which in some instances may be waived. It also allows people with disabilities to make more money or have more resources than in other Medicaid Programs in Maryland. The Council continues to serve on the Coalition which advises DHMH regarding program implementation and outreach. For more information about the Program, go to www.dhmh.state.md.us/html/hottopics_eid.htm.

SMALL GRANTS

∞ Initiatives and Outcomes ∞

Small Grants

Small Grants supported people with developmental disabilities and parents to attend and participate in conferences where they increased their knowledge and skills and shared valuable information with others across the state of Maryland.

Small grants also enable the Council to co-sponsor conferences as well as sponsor conference speakers.

HIGHLIGHTS IN 2006 INCLUDE:

- Sponsored the Endless Possibilities Pavilion at the World of Possibilities Expo, which provided hundreds of attendees with networking opportunities and resources from local support groups and self-advocacy groups.
- MSDE Infant & Toddler Conference sponsored speakers who informed family members and educators on strategies
 and techniques for building parent-to-professional partnerships which support the development of young children with
 developmental disabilities and delays.
- Wicomico County Community Resource Fair, where child care providers had the opportunity to earn Core of Knowledge credits
 for accreditation. Over 80 participants attended the fair which included professionals, family members and service providers.
 The participants were educated in American sign-language, transition issues, community supports and local resources.
- Disabilities Candidates Forum, where gubernatorial candidates shared their visions, answered questions and distributed their position papers to individuals and organizations from the disability community.

Other activities and initiatives supported by Council's small grants include:

- Sent additional funds to Louisiana to support individuals with developmental disabilities and their families that were affected by hurricane Katrina.
- The Council funded the layout, artwork and initial printing costs of Do-si-Do with Autism, a children's book written by a young woman with autism. The author's key message being, "People with disabilities and other differences are simply real people inside of bodies that work differently."

Self-Determination. 66No person is your friend who demands silence, or denies your right to grow. 99

Alice Walker

2007-2011 Maryland State Plan

The Plan

In 2006, The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council, which is 100% federally funded, completed its 2007-2011 five-year State Plan. The plan was approved by the federal Administration on Developmental Disabilities and will be used to guide the work of the Council over the next 5 years. The Council's plan is comprehensive and reflects the Council's commitment to building inclusive communities that welcome and support individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

The goals include systems change, capacity building and advocacy activities that will result in measurable outcomes in these areas: inclusive education and child care; self-advocacy, community supports, health, transportation, employment, housing, and recreation.

To review the entire plan, visit the Council's website at *www.md-council.org* and click on publications & reports.



The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

2006 COUNCIL MEMBERS

Jeff Rives *Chairperson*

Howard County

Elizabeth Weintraub

Chairperson

Montgomery County

Carol Ann Baglin

Represented by Rosemary King-Johnston

Division of Special Education, MSDE

Sarah Collier

Baltimore County

Diane Coughlin

Developmental Disabilities Administration, DHMH

Eva Cowen

Montgomery County

Kristen Cox

Represented by Tom Merrick

Maryland Department of Disabilities

M. Doreen Croser

Queen Anne's County

Victoria Deurr

Carroll County

George Flamer

Talbot County

Tom Fulton

Queen Anne's County

Gail Godwin

Baltimore City

Angela Harp

Baltimore County

Polly Huston

Division of Rehabilitation Services, MSDE

Mary Anne Kane-Breschi

Office for Genetics and Children with Special Health Care Needs, DHMH

Shin Ki Kim

Baltimore County

Joan Lawrence

Kennedy Krieger Institute

Leslie Seid Margolis

Maryland Disability Law Center

Patricia McCoy

Prince George's County

Wendell McKay *Howard County*

Vicki Mills

Frederick County

Steve Pyles

Prince George's County

Tim Quinn

The Arc of Northern Chesapeake Region

Robert Watson

Prince George's County

Thomas Webb

Vice-Chairperson Kent County

Grace Pushparany Williams

Prince George's County

Julie Venners Yannes

Montgomery County

2006 COUNCIL STAFF

Executive Director
Brian Cox

Deputy Director **Catherine Lyle**

Director of Communications/ Policy Specialist Angela Castillo-Epps Co-Directors of Public Policy Initiatives Michelle Hart and Kelli Nelson

Office Manager Linda Nelson

Family Net Works, Resource Specialist **Stephanie Watkins**

Youth Empowerment Alliance, YEA Project Director Ann Marie Lane



MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL

217 E. REDWOOD STREET, SUITE 1300

BALTIMORE, MD 21202 PHONE: 410-767-3670 TOLL-Free 1-800-305-6441

Fax: 410-333-3686 www.md-council.org

PERMIT NO. 1773
PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BALTIMORE, MD

